

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 4, 23 and 28 were canceled without prejudice in the previous response, and claim 43 has been canceled in this response. Claim 40 has been amended, and claims 49-51 have been added. It is believed that new claims 49-51 are supported by the application as originally filed. As a result of these amendments, claims 1, 3, 5-22, 24-27, 29-42 and 44-51 are currently pending and under consideration.

Initially, the applicants wish to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1, 3, 5-22, 24-27, and 29-39 on page 5 of the Office Action. Further, the applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 43 and 45 contained allowable subject matter on page 5. In that regard, the features of dependent claim 43 have been incorporated into independent claim 40, and dependent claim 43 has been canceled. Therefore, it is believed that independent claim 40 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance. Dependent claim 45 has been rewritten into independent form as new independent claim 49. It is therefore believed that independent claim 49 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance. Given that all the claims have been allowed or are in condition to be allowed, it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance.

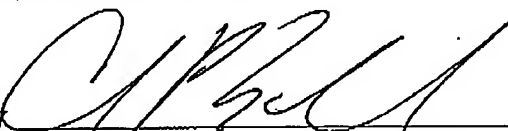
As mentioned in the previous response, an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) (including the PTO/SB/08 forms as well as the cited non-patent publications) was submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) on August 18, 2003. The Applicants complied with the USPTO rules regarding submission of the reference for the IDS. However, the applicants have not yet received an initialed copy of the IDS's SB/08 forms. After reviewing PAIR, it appears that this IDS and copies of the previously enclosed references were entered into the file. Since this IDS is on PAIR, duplicate copies of the references and the IDS are not enclosed. However, if the Examiner is unable to access or locate the IDS and its accompanying paperwork, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative by telephone to quickly resolve the issue. The Applicants believe that this omission was accidental and kindly request a copy of the IDS's SB/08 forms be returned with the initials of the Examiner placed by the cited references.

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It should be understood that the above remarks are not intended to provide an exhaustive basis for patentability or concede the basis for the rejections in the Office Action, but are simply provided to overcome the rejections made in the Office Action in the most expedient fashion.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned representative by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

By   
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